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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Plastic Recycling campaign expanded in Skopje

USAID Plastic Recycling Project in partnership with the City of Skopje and Public Utility Company "Komunalna Higiena" marked the kick off of the Municipal PET Collection Program. The goal of this event is to promote the campaign and the new pilot project component "Green Schools". The campaign is focused on promotion of plastic recycling and appropriate treatment of waste as key concepts towards preserving clean environment. The "Green Schools" component will be introduced to 30 primary schools. Employees from the Public Utility Company "Komunalna Higiena" and NGO's will conduct educational classes. The first educational class on PET recycling will be delivered by students from the Primary School "Dimo Hadzi Dimov" from Skopje.

"I believe that clean environment is one of the most important gifts we can give to our children. The role of the education system is highly important in this process. Education on environment awareness, proper sanitary conditions, monitoring the environmental health of our schools, school yards and their surroundings are essential for achieving a positive, nurturing learning environment and better quality of life" said Mr. Michael Fritz, the new Mission Director of USAID Macedonia.

The Primary School "Petar Pop- Arsov" from Skopje received first prize for collecting the largest quantity of PET waste, 350 kg, during the school year 2007/2008. This school was one of 14, included in the pilot phase, implemented during the period from November 2007 through June 2008. Mr. Trifun Kostovski, Mayor of Skopje, handed out the prize, statue in shape of project's mascot PET-MAN.

Upon finalising successfully its pilot phase, in June 2008, the project expanded its activities in 20 new municipalities, including the city of Skopje. In the new phase the project activities will be focused on organizing cleaning actions, public debates focused on waste management with attention on plastic recycling, supporting partners in delivering educational classes, advocacy activities focused on broader engagement of citizens, NGO sector and local business in maintaining clean environment.

The \$1.2 million USAID Plastic Recycling Project is implemented by Macedonian Business Resource Center- Trade and Investment Network (MDC-TI.Net) in partnership with 20 municipalities, as well as public or private waste management companies from each of these municipalities. The project has initiated plastic waste collection programs and Recycling Clubs in 14 primary schools, equipped 103 ecological Islands, and supported eight recycling companies with equipment purchase.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.